

SINGER AUSTIN MAHONE'S UNLIKELY ROLE MODEL

THE POP STAR SAYS HE WANTS TO BE LIKE ONE CONTROVERSIAL GUY. PAGE 16



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Monday, December 16, 2013 www.metro.us | t: MetroNew York | f: MetroNewYork

Luke Evans gets into 'The Hobbit'

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Miley Cyrus tops in 2013 pop culture

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Jets in the hangar for postseason

PAGE 27

NAUGHTY or NICE



Holly jolly celebration.

A correspondent from Denmark suits up and takes part in the annual New York City SantaCon festivities that happened over the weekend.

For goodness' sake.

The Lower East Side's efforts to keep drunk, out-of-control Santas from running rampant in the neighborhood was mostly successful. PAGE 02

A SantaCon partygoer high-fives a member of the NYPD on Dec. 14. / BESS ADLER, METRO

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—Tamu Arnoux,
BPS, Human Services, '13

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NEWS

Local tweet

"Christmas shopping in New York is actually my most favorite thing in the world. I wish I was a millionaire so I could get the best gifts"

jacqueline @jacroddgers



Top 3

Trending online at Metro.us

1 Lindsay Lohan to pen tell-all book'

2 PHOTOS: Two brothers pose with Santa every year since 1980'

3 Teenaged parents made 2-year-old smoke marijuana: Report'



Maja Lundager Pedersen, far right, and other Santas file out of the subway on Dec. 14. Most of the SantaCon festivities took place in the East Village this year. / BESS ADLER AND MAJA LUNDAGER PEDERSEN, METRO

A Dane tackles an American tradition

Holiday party. A foreigner decides to see if SantaCon lives up to the hype.

I've heard crazy stories about New York SantaCon, where hundreds of people dress like ol' Saint Nick to drink themselves blind and slur carols around the city.

Having been in the States for months, away from my native Denmark, I was interested in separating myth from reality about what has become an international pub crawl.

First things first: I had to prep for SantaCon — sort of like preparing for a marathon. What shoes should I wear? Would it be best to bring protein

bars or fruit with me? Will people laugh at my Santa Claus costume?

After I dress suitably for the weather — lots of snow — I jump on the subway and head to the East Village to meet up with a mass of revelers.

The minute I step into the East Village, I'm surrounded by red. Hundreds of Santas of all shapes and sizes swarm around me. Within no time, I've met a group of Santas who have been coming to SantaCon for years. They promise to show me around and we end up at the Crocodile Lounge on 14th Street, pounding beers.

As they drink, the Santas wax philosophical about the event. Ronald, 26, tells me why he participates: "SantaCon is the best holiday of the year.

Winter wonderland

"I stop to ask a trashed polar bear for directions to Union Square. Unfortunately, the guy in the suit is so wasted he doesn't seem to understand what I'm saying."

Everybody is Santa. No judgments," he says.

After a couple more beers, I decide to split off from the group and find some Santas heading for Brooklyn.

In Union Square, another Santa Claus comes up and says, "Are you my soul mate? I'm looking for a Mrs. Claus and I think you are her."

His name is Rich and

the line is terrible. But he and his friends are on their way to Brooklyn, so I decide to tag along.

My "soul mate" and I join hundreds of other Santas filling up the subway on an unholy pilgrimage to find "Santa's Toy Factory" on Nostrand Ave.

By the time we get to "Santa's Toy Factory," the line for the party stretches down the block.

It's only 4 p.m., but the thought of standing in an hour-long line, way too sober, makes me repeat what I heard a drunken Santa say earlier: "I quit."

SantaCon has been an adventure of epic proportions, but I head home and celebrate out of the cold.

MAJA LUNDAGER PEDERSEN
letters@metro.us

Christmas spirit

Lower East Side spared from worst Santa revelers

Despite Lower East Side residents' successful efforts to redraw the SantaCon route map, a splinter group of renegade revelers still made their merry way into the neighborhood to swig back some Christmas cheer on Dec. 14, a community activist said.

"The good news is we didn't have the main people throughout this area, but we still had a group that came through," said Diem Boyd, founder of LES Dwellers.

"We had scantily clad elves and what-have-you. These people weren't part of the official SantaCon, which only shows this is something you can't control."

LES Dwellers distributed signs to a number of local bars that elected not to serve SantaCon participants.

"Take your bodily fluids & public intoxication elsewhere (off the island preferably)," the signs read.

The number of Santa-dressed bar-hoppers was in the hundreds this year, rather than the thousands, Boyd said.

"But still, they were here till 4 in the morning. We woke up to Santa's jacket run over by cars and frozen into ice," he said. **EMILY JOHNSON**

Man survives fall onto train tracks



The man squeezed into the track bed so the R train didn't hit him. / GETTY IMAGES

A Bronx man who fell onto the subway tracks at Union Square late Saturday night survived by lying down in the gap between the rails as a train passed directly over him.

The man, identified as 55-year-old Ralph Mercado, fell onto the northbound R train tracks around 11:30 p.m., police said. With a train bearing

Life or death

Ralph Mercado, 55, fell onto the northbound R train tracks at Union Square.

down, he laid flat in the track bed just before it roared over him.

A video posted to YouTube by witness

Suzannah Troy shows the immediate aftermath of the frightening incident.

An MTA official peers down into the tracks and shouts, "Don't move!" before picking up his radio to say, "Person's alive in the trough, I need power off on two track."

Mercado was taken to Bellevue Hospital, where he was listed in stable condition. **EMILY JOHNSON**

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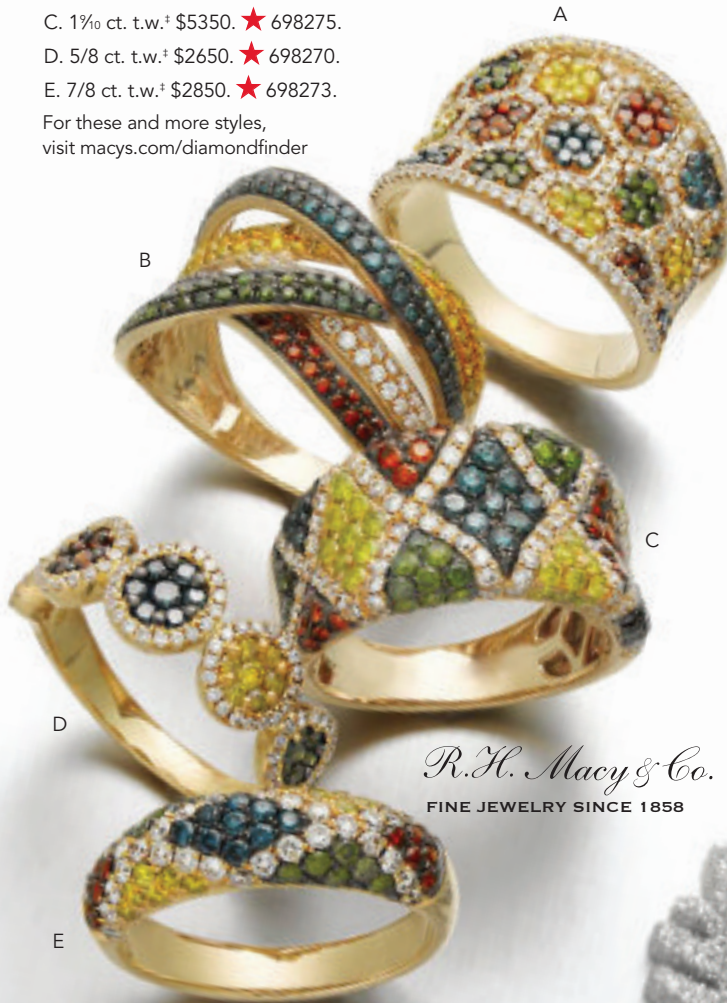
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Bill Bratton has said he plans on reforming some of the more contentious police practices. / GETTY IMAGES

Group hopes Bratton open to changes

Stop-and-frisk.

Communities United for Police Reform is set to release a list of recommendations that they hope the new police chief follows.

New bills

Advocates also hope Bratton will push two Community Safety Act bills that have yet to be passed.

- One bill would require officers to inform New Yorkers of their right to refuse a search with a

Miranda-like warning.

- Another bill would require officers to identify themselves as NYPD when engaging in police behavior and also to explain the reason for whatever action they're taking.

Suggestions

The source reports that advocates plan to suggest the NYPD "institute new performance management systems that replace crude stop and arrest quotas."

Incoming New York Police Commissioner Bill Bratton's first meeting with community organizers and advocates took place Thursday, Dec. 12.

According to a source familiar with the meeting, Communities United for Police Reform, a group focusing on ending discriminatory policing practices, will release a set of policy recommendations today based on the issues discussed with Bratton at the meeting.

The advocates reportedly called Bratton's attention to the policies and behaviors that have been found to be discriminatory in their purpose or implementation, from stop-and-frisk to the NYPD's Muslim surveillance program. Their recommendations range from pushing for changes in police behavior to increasing transparency and compliance with City Council legisla-

tion and federal court rulings.

Their recommendations will highlight the so-called "quota system" that police union leaders have said encourages officers to engage in excessive enforcement behavior, including conducting unwarranted stops.

And they will not only urge Bratton and Bill de Blasio's administration to drop the appeal of the Floyd v. City of New York decision declaring the NYPD's implementation of stop-and-frisk unconstitutional, but they will

ask that the NYPD and the city actively support implementation of the remedies issued with the Floyd decision, as well as the reforms in the City Council's Community Safety Act laws.

Bratton was also reportedly reminded of a failing grade then-Public Advocate Bill de Blasio doled out to the NYPD on a "Transparency Report Card" in April.

De Blasio's criticism was based on reports of the NYPD failing to obey Freedom of Information Law requests and making records public. Based on the meeting with Bratton, advocates plan to encourage him to keep the NYPD on task with complying with FOIL, the Open Meetings Law and the Open Data Law.



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Coat drive organizers: Donations fall far short

Charity. The New York Cares coat drive is down in donations this year, even as need has increased.

In a basement on Manhattan's West 31st Street, piles of coats are sorted for men, women, children and toddlers, and they're eventually distributed to New Yorkers in need.

But so far this year, only about 8,500 coats have been donated for the 25th annual New York Cares drive. Around 97,000 coats have been requested by nonprofits, and many could use more.

"We're down about 35 percent from where we are in a typical year," said New York Cares Executive Director Gary Bagley. "We've had very mild weather so far this winter. Sometimes we wonder if people really think about it until they themselves are really cold."

The coats are distributed to groups, churches and shelters around the city. As of Friday, around 400 organizations and agencies have requested coats, but the drive had only reached the 20th group on the list.

After superstorm Sandy last year, New York Cares received some 123,000 coats during its drive. Bagley worries that without the hurricane, potential donors might



New York Cares is hosting a drive to collect coats for charities, churches and shelters. / GETTY IMAGES

How to donate

Thousands more coats, especially large men's and children's coats, are needed for the New York Cares drive this year. Here's how to donate:

- Take coats to any NYPD precinct 24 hours a day.
- Many transit hubs accept

coats, but drop-off times vary.

- Find the closest drop-off location at www.newyorkcares.org/coat-drive/map.
- Visit NewYorkCares.org or call 212-228-5000 for more information.

now be less aware of need. "Or they might have given a great deal last year," he added.

But need doesn't fluctuate like generosity, Bagley said. Children often grow out of winter coats in just a year and coats might not survive the seasons for homeless individuals living outside.

Bagley said more New Yorkers need coats than in typical years. Before the storm, 80,000 coats were collected in 2011.

"More people are in need of a warm winter coat this year," he said.

He said that he thinks the city's stagnating poverty rate and the continually increasing homeless

shelter population are factors in the rising need for coats. Sandy, too, continues to play a role.

"For folks to get back on their feet after the hurricane is a longer process than many may be aware of," Bagley said.

At a distribution event in the Rockaways this year, Bagley said there was a line around the block even after all the coats were passed out.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo urged New Yorkers to donate coats last week, after the low numbers were revealed.

"We didn't want to wait to see if it picks up, before it's too late," Bagley said.

ANNA SANDERS
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Woman fights off attempted rapist

By the numbers

2

Number of pocket knives the attempted rape suspect had

was able to wrestle away from him.

The man had a second knife, cutting the woman on her left wrist and right ring finger during a struggle.

Police said the man

retrieved the first knife before the woman was able to push him out into the hallway and shut her door. The man fled in an unknown direction.

He is described as black, in his early 20s, roughly 5-foot-10 and 180 pounds. Police said he was wearing a black hoodie with white letters and blue long johns.

Cops ask anyone with information to call 1-800-577-TIPS (8477).

ANNA SANDERS



The suspect / NYPD

A 27-year-old woman fought off a rape attempt in her Queens apartment after being ordered to strip at knife point Friday morning, police said.

A man got inside the woman's Ozone Park apartment around 10 a.m. and put a pocket knife to her neck, ordering her to take off her clothes.

The woman complied, police said, but struggled with the man for the knife, which she



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South Africa buries 'greatest son' Mandela



Mandela's casket arrives for his state funeral in Qunu, South Africa. / GETTY IMAGES

Service. Family, friends and dignitaries attended the state funeral in a huge domed tent.

South Africa buried Nelson Mandela on Sunday, leaving the multiracial democracy he founded without its living inspiration and still striving for the "Rainbow Nation" ideal of shared prosperity he had dreamed of.

The Nobel Peace laureate, who was held in apartheid prisons for 27 years before emerging to

preach forgiveness and reconciliation, was laid to rest at his ancestral home in Qunu after a send-off combining military pomp with the traditional rites of his Xhosa abaThembu clan.

As the coffin was lowered into the wreath-ringed grave, three army helicopters flew over bearing the South African flag on weighted cables, a poignant echo of the anti-apartheid leader's inauguration as the nation's first black president nearly two decades ago.

A battery fired a 21-gun salute, the booms reverberating around the rolling hills of the Eastern

Quoted

"Yours was truly a long walk to freedom, and now you have achieved the ultimate freedom in the bosom of your maker."

General Monwabisi Jamangile
Armed forces chaplain said at the grave site

Candles

95

Nelson Mandela's flag-covered casket was placed on black and white Nguni cattle skins in front of a crescent of 95 candles, one for each year of Mandela's life, as a choir sang "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika," the national anthem that South Africa adopted after the end of apartheid in 1994.

Cape, before five fighter jets flying low in formation roared over the valley.

Among the 450 mourners at the private burial ceremony were relatives, political leaders and foreign guests including Britain's Prince Charles, American civil rights activist Rev. Jesse Jackson and talk-show host Oprah Winfrey. **REUTERS**

Charismatic actor

Peter O'Toole dies at 81 after long illness

One of the most acclaimed actors of screen and stage, Peter O'Toole died peacefully at home at age 81, his agent said on Sunday. O'Toole had been battling illness for the last few years. In June 2012, after more than six decades of work, he officially retired.

Already a celebrated star of the English stage,

PETER O'TOOLE
GETTY IMAGES

O'Toole shot to stardom with his first major picture, 1962's "Lawrence of Arabia." His striking good looks, piercing blue eyes and uncommon

intensity made him the perfect young thespian to thrust into the spotlight. O'Toole was awarded an Oscar nomination, which proved to be the first of eight throughout his lifetime.

In fact, O'Toole is notable as the actor with the most Academy Award nominations without ever winning. Even more incredibly, the nominations were all for Best Actor, including his combustible Henry II in 1968's "The Lion in Win-

ter," an earl who thinks he's Jesus Christ in 1972's "The Ruling Class" and a drunken actor doing a TV appearance in 1982's "My Favorite Year."

His last nomination was in 2006, for "Venus," in which he played a dirty old man who bonded with his comely great-niece (Jodie Whittaker). Looking sickly and haggard — a result of rather legendary partying — the film played as a farewell to the medium he so enriched. **MATT PRIGGE, METRO**

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Lunar

Chinese unmanned spacecraft lands on the moon

China landed an unmanned spacecraft on the moon on Saturday, state media reported, in the first such "soft-landing" since 1976, joining the United States and the former Soviet Union in

managing to accomplish such a feat.

The Chang'e 3, a probe named after a lunar goddess in traditional Chinese mythology, is carrying the solar-powered Yutu, or Jade Rabbit buggy, which will conduct geological surveys.

China has been increasingly ambitious in developing its space programs. **REUTERS**

Rebel conflict

Syria helicopter bomb raids kill 36 in Aleppo

Thirty-six people, nearly half of them children, were killed on Sunday when Syrian army helicopters dropped "barrel bombs" on the disputed city of Aleppo, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Video uploaded by local activists showed a fire in a narrow street covered in debris and dust after one air raid in the Karam el-Beik district. Another showed blackened and twisted wreckage of a vehicle at a busy roundabout.

Barrel bombs are explosive-filled cylinders or oil barrels. **REUTERS**

Ukrainians rally against government



Protesters rallied at Independence Square to force President Viktor Yanukovich to resign on Sunday in Kiev, Ukraine. / GETTY IMAGES

Moscow. Protesters called for a rally on Tuesday to monitor Yanukovich's trip.

Thousands rallied on Sunday against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich just days before he heads for a meeting in the Kremlin and opposition leaders told him not to bother coming back if he "sells out" Ukraine.

Minutes before the rally, EU enlargement chief Stefan Fuele said on Twitter he had told Ukraine he was suspending work on a trade and political deal, which should have been signed two weeks ago, saying Kiev's arguments to improve terms had "no grounds in reality."

Fuele's words suggested the European Union has lost patience with Kiev's demands for financial aid and was irritated at the way the bloc was being forced to take part in a "bidding war" with Russia over Ukraine.

The focus was now on a visit Yanukovich is to make to Moscow to tie up trade agreements with the Kremlin to help the distressed Ukrainian

Support

Sen. McCain speaks to crowd

The anti-government protesters received powerful encouragement on Sunday as U.S. Senator John McCain addressed the crowd on Kiev's Independence Square, telling them their destiny is Europe.

"We are here to support your just cause, the sovereign right of Ukraine to determine its own destiny freely and independently. And the destiny you seek lies in Europe," said McCain, a leading Republican voice on U.S. foreign policy.

economy, but which the opposition fears will slam the door on integration with the European mainstream.

They fear he may take the first steps toward joining a Moscow-led customs union, together with Belarus and Kazakhstan, which they see as an attempt by Vladimir Putin to recreate the Soviet Union. **REUTERS**

Quoted

"We forbid this president to sign anything in Moscow that contradicts the interests of the Ukrainian state."

Oleh Tyahnybok, far-right nationalist leader

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Part of Utah's bigamy law struck down in victory for TV star



The cast of TLC's "Sister Wives," Christine Brown, Janelle Brown, Robyn Brown and Meri Brown, pose with husband Kody Brown. / GETTY IMAGES

Ruling. Kody Brown praised Waddoups' "courageous decision" in a statement.

A U.S. federal judge struck down a portion of Utah's bigamy laws as unconstitutional on Friday, siding with a reality television star and his four wives.

Polygamy is illegal in all 50 states. But Utah's law is unique in that a person can be found guilty not just for hav-

ing two legal marriage licenses, but also for cohabiting with another adult in a marriage-like relationship when they are already legally married to someone else.

U.S. District Judge Clark Waddoups ruled the second aspect is too broad because it bars consenting adults from living together and criminalizes their intimate sexual relationships.

He said the law violates both the First Amendment's clause ensuring religious rights and the 14th Amendment's due

process clause designed to ensure liberty.

The rest of Utah's bigamy law remains intact under the ruling, so only individuals who fraudulently obtain multiple marriage licenses would be guilty. **REUTERS**

Children

17

Brown's family, including 17 children who formerly lived in Lehi, Utah, are members of the Apostolic United Brethren, a Utah church that follows plural marriage doctrine.

Javad Zarif

Iran minister says nuclear pause talks will continue

Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the Islamic Republic is committed to reaching an accord over nuclear activities even as the U.S. seeks to punish companies for possibly violating sanctions.

Zarif, in an interview Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation," said it was "a very wrong move" for the U.S. government to freeze assets of companies doing business with Iran while a deal aimed at keeping his country from developing nuclear weapons is being pursued. **BLOOMBERG**

Berlin. Merkel picks popular woman ally as defense minister

German Chancellor Angela Merkel named Ursula von der Leyen as her new defense minister on Sunday, a surprising choice that could vault the ambitious ally into the lead as the front-runner to one day succeed the chancellor.

Merkel, 59, will begin her third term on Tuesday — three months after winning the Sept. 22 election — now that her junior coalition partners, the Social Democrats, voted on Saturday to join her in a "grand coalition."

Even though Merkel has an aversion to the unexpected, she pulled a rabbit out of her hat in picking the spirited von der Leyen to lead defense,



Ursula von der Leyen
GETTY IMAGES

one of the top jobs in her cabinet with a 33-billion euro budget.

"Those who know her know that she has always had an interest in international issues alongside social policies," Merkel told a news conference. **REUTERS**

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Somber

Sandy Hook shooting remembered

One year later, the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., still evokes raw emotion and sadness. On Saturday, a day after another school shooting, this time at a Colorado high school where one student was wounded, the United States paused to remember the tragedy and revisit the contentious issue of guns in America.

Newtown officials said the town wanted to be left alone on the anniversary. Some of the victims' families encouraged those moved by the shooting to mark the day by performing an act of kindness in their own communities.

In Newtown and elsewhere around the country, bells tolled in remembrance of those who died. **REUTERS**



Sandy Hook: A year later in pictures

Residents of Newtown, Conn., quietly marked the one-year anniversary of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School over the weekend. Some people chose to remember publicly by displaying memorials on their lawns. Others warned the media to stay away. **/NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, METRO**



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Dr. Lee Skallerup Besette is an English and writing instructor who has been teaching at colleges for almost 15 years, in three different states, two countries and two languages. She has seen it all and heard it all. You can follow her on Twitter, @readywriting, and check out her blog, College Ready Writing, where she talks about the broader issues and challenges facing higher education today.



'I DON'T DESERVE THIS GRADE!'

It's the end of the semester and your grades are about to be posted, if they haven't been already. Some of your grades may end up being a disappointment to you. Before you go to complain to your professor about how unfair your final grade seems, take a breath and follow these steps.

1 Check the syllabus: It bears repeating that most of the answers to students' questions can be found in the handy-dandy syllabus. It should clearly have the grade breakdown laid out. Just because you got an A on the majority of your assignments doesn't mean you will get an A in the class. It depends what the assignments you aced were worth.

2 Check what you missed: Don't forget, your grade isn't just based on what you did, but what you didn't do as well. If you received A's on all the work you did, but you only did half the work, then those A's turn into F's pretty quickly.

Now, professors make mistakes when they calculate grades; invariably, every semester, I misread my spreadsheet in the transfer to the official system or forget to count something from a student who handed work in at a different time. These things happen, and if you believe this is what went wonky with your grade, calmly

and rationally contact the professor about the potential mistake.

More often than not, though, you receive the grade you earned. And that you "need" a certain grade in no way convinces your professors of their error or unfairness. In fact, "needing" a grade is on you, the student, to make sure that you work to earn that grade. It's not the professor's responsibility to retroactively change the grade once the work has been completed.

If you get a grade that is lower than you expected or wanted, take it as a wake-up call. What can you do next semester to



If a grade isn't what you expected, take it as a wake-up call.

GETTY IMAGES

make sure you are not in a similar situation again? Go to the professor's office hours. Get more sleep. Create better study habits. Go to the tutoring center on

campus for extra help. Be proactive, because by the time the semester ends, you get the grade you've earned — whether you think you deserve it or not.



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Students dream big with DIY

Pitch it. Courses teach business savvy to young entrepreneurs.

Look out, "Shark Tank" contestants; budding entrepreneurs are honing their pitches. Montclair State University students are flexing their abilities by participating in its new Certificate of Entrepreneurship program.

Launched this fall, the program consists of three three-credit courses for students of every major. Dennis Bone, director of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship at the School of Business, says it's no surprise it's hot, hot, hot. "Students innately understand that the economy ... is different than the [one] in which their parents cre-

Light bulb

So you have an idea, now what?

- **Talk to an intellectual property attorney.** Bone recommends getting advice to understand the way you can protect a truly innovative idea.
- **Use a Business Model Canvas.** Begin testing your idea with potential customers to see what they think.
- **Develop it.** In this stage, Bone suggests entrepreneurs can develop their operations and execution plan. From there, they can determine how much capital is needed and what resources exist to launch the venture.

ated their careers. Students get that they're entering the DIY (do-it-yourself) economy."

For sophomore Megan Blust, the DIY economy is spot-on. She enjoyed the entrepreneurship course because "every class was different," she says. "I never saw myself working behind a desk."

Her mind-set changed in the creativity boot camp module when asked to create something from random objects like tarps, balloons, sunglasses and a jump rope. Bone explains, "During these three weeks we challenged students working in teams to test their creative problem-solving skills by creating solutions using random materials."

Although Blust was "extremely intimidated" by a limited supply of materials on campus, she learned a



Students work together as part of Montclair State University's class on entrepreneurship and innovation. / MIKE PETERS

lot. "It was completely insane but it taught us how to create something out of nothing," she says.

As students work on projects like solving doctors' offices' long waiting times and promoting non-GMO food, their goal is to launch an entrepreneurial venture by May. Bone adds, "Teams spend the majority of their time testing their solution in the marketplace, getting feedback from potential customers and refining their solution and business model."

Jen Groover, a serial entrepreneur, says this process is critical. "Recognize that failure is just part of the process," she says. "Obviously, no one wants to fail, but if you aren't failing, you aren't taking enough risks and growing."

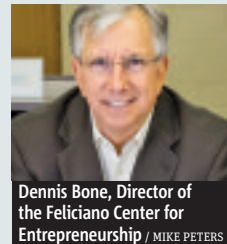
Nick Friedman agrees. The president and co-founder of College Hunks Hauling Junk, a junk removal service, co-created his business prior to his senior year of college 10 years ago, quit his "miserable" day job soon after

graduating and now has 51 franchises. He suggests that students should start with their vision and work backward. "You reverse-engineer to the present so you have the destination or the picture in mind of what you want your business to look like in three, five, 10 years and work backward to the present. What's step one to make that vision a reality?"

VICKI SALEMI
letters@metro.us

Keys to entrepreneurial success

- **Expect failure and learn from it.** "All entrepreneurs fail," says Bone. "The most important aspect of failure is to learn from it and then leverage what you learned."
- **Network, network, network.** "Surround yourself with creative and supportive individuals. Learn from them. Collaborate with them."
- **Always seek mentorship.** Groover explains, "Find people who have accom-



Dennis Bone, Director of the Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship / MIKE PETERS

plished what you want to accomplish and be willing to learn from them."

- **Take action.** Business ideas mean nothing

without action. Friedman explains, "It's fun to come up with ideas and come up with creative solutions but take action on it and try to test it."

- **Rely on resources.** Friedman recommends reaching out however you can. "As a student, you have so many resources at your fingertips with professors and alumni, and when you're young, you have so much less to lose than when adult responsibilities pile up." Go for it!

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Study says student data is vulnerable

Report. Privacy becomes an issue as online services track data.

School districts across the United States are failing to properly protect troves of sensitive student data as they rush to adopt new online systems pitched by private companies, a report released on Friday found.

Most of the 23 school districts studied had inadequate privacy protections and poorly defined contracts with outside vendors that left student data vulnerable, says the Center on Law and Information Policy at Fordham Law School, which conducted the review.

In most of districts studied, parents did not have to consent to the outside use of their child's information, and many agreements did not place clear limits on how vendors could use the data they collected.

In the cloud-based model, vendors sometimes



Students and parents are pushing for increased security as schools use outside contracts to manage data and records. / ZOOMAR RF

offer their services at a low cost in the hope of profits from the data they collect.

"Schools right now are unable to deal effectively with privacy issues," says Joel Reidenberg, the lead author of the study. "They're not in a position to understand the implications of some of the services they're contracting."

The study examined policies in a wide swath of districts across the country, ranging from the 204,000-student Houston

Independent School District to a district in Oregon with just 264 students.

Cloud computing now plays a role in everything from testing to college counseling. That can mean handing over huge and diverse amounts of data to third-party vendors. A payment mechanism used in the lunchroom could give a vendor access to which students qualify for federal free lunch, considered a measure of poverty, Reidenberg noted. Online

health classes can retain information about students' weight and exercise habits.

A significant amount of the data now being used is not even covered under federal legislation as the law fails to keep up with the ever-expanding educational technology sphere, the study warned.

The fact that many education technology companies providing cloud services to schools are looking toward student data to finance themselves puts them in murky legal territory, says Khaliah Barnes, of the Electronic Privacy Information Center.

Schools simply do not have the legal and technical knowledge to keep up, Barnes says. "It's not the technology itself that's a problem," says Reidenberg. "But school districts need to be paying more attention." **REUTERS**

Quoted

"Schools right now are unable to deal effectively with privacy issues. They're not in a position to understand the implications of some of the services they're contracting."

Joel Reidenberg, lead author of the study

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CULTURE

Twitter feed

We check in with some of Hollywood's biggest names to see what they've been up to — in their own words, in 140 characters or fewer.

Today, Jimmy Kimmel appreciates innovation, Neil Patrick Harris has been over-indulging, Albert Brooks sees where this is going and Sarah Silverman is here to entertain you.

@jimmykimmel: pockets were a great idea

@ActuallyNPH: Enjoying my weekend of various holiday parties. Bring on the nog! #hiccup

@AlbertBrooks: Congrats to China for landing on the moon. Can't wait for my first iPhone that says: "designed in California, made on the moon."

@SarahKSilverman: I'll now be live tweeting my post-nap haze

The craziest rumors the stars have read about themselves

We were on the red carpet at Friday's Jingle Ball concert at Madison Square Garden, where Miley Cyrus, Robin Thicke, Macklemore, Enrique Iglesias and many other stars took the stage. So many big stars in one room means many opportunities for misinformation, so we decided to help the stars out — we had them clear up the craziest rumor they've heard about themselves. Here's what they had to say.



Seacrest / ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Snooki

What's the funniest story you've ever read about yourself?

That I dated Drake.

JWOWW: How was it?
It was great!



JWOWW AND SNOOKI

Ryan Seacrest

What is the funniest story you have ever read about yourself?

That I can sing!

You can't sing?
I cannot sing.
Just rap.



Lutz

Kellan Lutz

What's the funniest story you've ever read about yourself?

I don't know how to read, so I don't know how to answer that question. No, I'm joking.

Austin Mahone

What's the funniest story you've ever read about yourself?

Some person wrote about me saying that my favorite sport is surfing, but I've never surfed in my life, so I don't know where they got that.



MAHONE



DR. OZ

Dr. Oz

What's the funniest story you've ever read about yourself?

There was an article that I was having an affair with Oprah.

Of all people! What did you think?

It was a crazy idea.

— with reporting by
Maja Lundager

Talking points

Connick Jr. is ready for 'Idol'

Harry Connick Jr. is the new kid at the "American Idol" judge's table this season, and he only has nice things to say about his seat mates, Jennifer Lopez and Keith Urban. "They are really cool people; they have been around for a minute and have a lot of experience

being in this business," he told us at Friday's concert. But Connick Jr. shouldn't sell himself short — his own experience is sure to come in handy for the new crop of contestants on "American Idol," which premieres its 13th season next month. Host Ryan Seacrest was thrilled for Connick to be joining the "American Idol" family as well. "Harry is going to be America's sweetheart," he told us.

Austin Mahone: 'I really admire Chris Brown'

File this under "needs



Austin Mahone needs to rethink his idols.

better media training": We stopped budding superstar Austin Mahone on the Jingle Ball red carpet and asked him about his influences as he carves out his identity in the music biz. His answer? Everyone's favorite good-boy-next-door, Chris

Brown. Wait, what?! "I really admire the way he dances and I feel like he always comes up with something really creative for his shows," the 17-year-old Texan told us. Time to get some better role models, kid.

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson takes on the world of gossip.

DOROTHY ROBINSON
@dorothyatmetro
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WIREIMAGE

Last year, as the first "Hobbit" installment raked in more than \$1 billion worldwide, Welsh actor Luke Evans sat quietly by as Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen and Richard Armitage got all the attention, since his work as Bard the Bowman wouldn't turn up until the second film, "The Desolation of Smaug." Well, Evans has to wait no longer.

After three "Lord of the Rings" films and the first "Hobbit," it's kind of a foregone conclusion that New Zealand is a beautiful place, isn't it? Yeah, I think we need to just give up now. We all know this. Maybe we should just say, "Actually, it's a s—hole." [Laughs] No, it's great. The Kiwis, they're very proud of their country and how they've preserved it in a really beautiful way, especially the South Island. It's so unspoiled. You drive down certain roads in these mountains and you're just waiting for a pterodactyl to fly off around the corner.

You filmed your part before even the first "Hobbit" had come out. What was it like last year watching the reactions for that one, knowing that to audiences you still weren't quite a part of it? It was enjoyable, but it was also a bit of, "Aw, shame I'm not part of this," you know? But I've been very patient, I've bided my time, and now my turn has come and now I'm in the story and I'm not going anywhere now. I'm here till the end.

Do you have an action figure yet?

I have a Lego character — that's quite cool. It's not so much action. He can't bend his arms, but he looks quite cool. And he has a Lego Lake-town as well, and a little plastic bow and arrow. And he's got a really angry face. His eyebrows are all squashed together! I don't know whether I have a character [figure]. I know that they have a special edition



LUKE EVANS

The actor belatedly joins the "Hobbit" franchise as strapping Bard the Bowman.

CRASHING THE PARTY

sculpture that I posed for in New Zealand at [special effects house] WETA, which I've seen the 3-D model of, and it's amazing. I mean, when it comes out it's everybody's Christmas present, done and dusted. I just have to go and order one thing for everyone. Just get a case of them. [Laughs] Really, how self-indulgent is that? "Hello, Happy Christmas, here's a model of me."

You could go one better and keep a box at home to give people when they stop by.

Hand out some action figures, yeah. To anybody. "Lego? Anybody want some Lego?" [Laughs] "Take a little Luke with you." That wouldn't go over too well.



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For breakfast

Big at Denny's

So you didn't have any input on the Lego face?

No, no, obviously not. But it's great. I mean, it's a lovely thing, isn't it? That's the fun thing about being

part of something as big as "The Hobbit," things like that happen. Apparently Denny's, the diner, has a whole Lake-town menu. It has, like, the Bard's Brew and the Bowman's Pumpkin Pie. I'm tempted

to go down there and order it all and just sit there munching through a Denny's breakfast.

That's not recommended, actually. No, no, of course.

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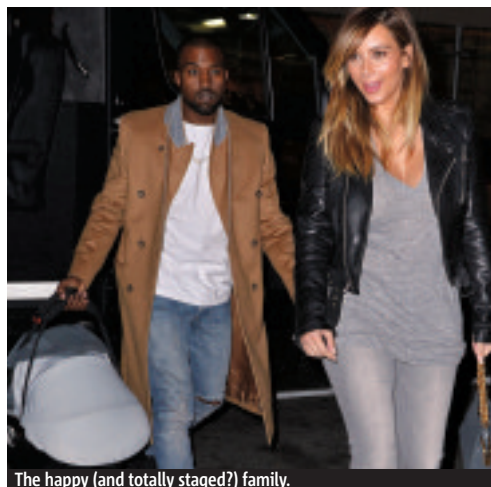


Miley Cyrus transformed from Hannah Montana into a tongue-wagging Twerk Monster this year. / ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Top pop culture

Roundup. This year, these events shocked us — or at least got us talking.

Pop culture gets a bad rap, according to Metro's gossip editor, Dorothy Robinson. Sure, it's lowbrow (especially when Miley Cyrus decides to take her clothes off with no deference to taste or talent) and it births fame-hungry monsters (Kimye, you are a creation even Walter Winchell couldn't dream up). Yet, the hijinks and disasters of people who fly so very high take us away from the humdrum of everyday life. Keeping up with Miley is a nice distraction from the fact that the cable bill is due. Watching Beyonce at the Super Bowl is a reminder of what is humanly possible if you have drive, talent and a whole lot of luck. And witnessing



The happy (and totally staged?) family.

the untimely deaths of two stars reminds us that even our little lives are ones worth living. In fact, maybe we're the lucky ones, blessed to be outside looking in — instead of the other way around.

"I didn't put the Royal Baby

on my list because I thought that fell under news. Come on: Kate Middleton should NEVER be on the same list as Miley or Kim Kardashian, even if she is engaged to Kanye West. And although Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger wasn't earth-shaking, it was so delight-

fully weird that I thought it deserved a mention."

DOROTHY ROBINSON

"People only put Paul Walker because it just, just happened, right? Did anyone actually care about Paul Walker?"

RACHEL VIGODA

Staff picks

- 1 Miley Cyrus transforms from Hannah Montana to tongue-wagging Twerk Monster
- 2 Kanye West and Kim Kardashian reproduce; North West is born
- 3 William and Kate reproduce; Prince George is born
- 4 Beyonce wins the Super Bowl
- 5 Tie: Cory Monteith/ Paul Walker dies

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moments of 2013

"Not for his body of work so much as I think the world lost a really pretty face. REALLY pretty." **TINA CHADHA**

"I, for one, definitely had Beyoncé winning the Super Bowl on my list. Nothing can stop her, not even a black-out. I don't even remember who actually played. All I remember is the Destiny's Child reunion and Beyoncé's black lace body suit. She wins." **EMILY LAURENCE**

"You do all know that royal gossip is a conspiracy, right? It's something that after America won the Revolutionary War, we had to sign a concession that our major media outlets would always pretend to care about what the British royals were doing. WE MUST BREAK THE CHAIN, PEOPLE! USA! USA! USA!" **PAT HEALY**

"I was a little worried that people would forget about Cory Monteith for a second,



The birth of Prince George was kind of a big deal.

since we've all been Walker-verse for the past month. But then again, how could anyone forget that sweet voice? Those piercing eyes? That body that Lea Michele bearded for so well?" **MEREDITH ENGEL**

"I don't think anything about the Kimye relationship is real. It's part of a long-con, right? Kanye, years

from now, will be like, 'I was totally joking about that marriage and child.'" **PH**

"I can't find any evidence supporting the theory that Kanye has a sense of humor; I fear he is gravely serious. We mere mortals just do not understand him." **T. MICHELLE MURPHY**

"I guess unlike other calcu-

Editor's picks

- 1 Miley Cyrus' crazy year
- 2 The evolution of Kimye (and the birth of baby North West)
- 3 Beyoncé wins the Super Bowl
- 4 Cory Monteith overdosing
- 5 Avril Lavigne marrying Chad Kroeger

lated 'Look at me! I'm no longer a Disney pop princess! I'm now a woman!' coming-out moments (see: Britney in the red pleather body suit; Christina's suggestive 'Genie in a Bottle'), Miley's coming out seems raw and unpolished. She's going more for shock value than sex appeal. Which, honestly, is slightly refreshing. Just put the tongue away, girlfriend." **DR**



Beyoncé destroyed the Super Bowl this year.

Knee Arthritis Pain?

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Box office. A major 'Desolation' indeed



Martin Freeman and many dwarfs return for the second "Hobbit." WARNER BROS. PICTURES

A small hobbit racked up big sales at movie box offices during the weekend, generating an estimated \$205 million at theaters around the world with the debut of highly anticipated sequel "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug."

The second installment in the 3-D "Hobbit" film trilogy earned \$73.7 million of its global haul in the United States and Canada, where it easily topped weekend movie charts.

Walt Disney Co.'s animated fairy tale "Fro-

zen" took the No. 2 spot, selling \$22.2 million worth of tickets from Friday through Sunday, beating new comedy "Tyler Perry's A Madea Christmas" which was third with \$16 million.

Sequel "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" earned \$13.2 million domestically for the weekend, claiming the No. 4 spot. Its worldwide cumulative total climbed to \$740 million, eclipsing the total sales for the first "Hunger Games" movie.

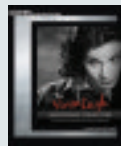
REUTERS

WHAT'S IN THE BOX? DISC SETS TO GET A LOVED ONE (OR YOURSELF)

Give a damn

Vivien Leigh Anniversary Collection

\$59.98
Despite headlining "Gone With the Wind," Vivien Leigh boasts a



slim filmography. This box bears four from her youth, including 1937's "Fire Over England," in which she and new lover Laurence Olivier scorched up the screen. Also, behold her natural British accent!

Bond 50

\$299.99

The 007 franchise is better as a whole and in specific bits than as individual films. Even the best — "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" — has its problems, and one of them isn't George Lazenby. That's why it's advisable, if you must, to get your hands on all 23 of them. It's a fascinating series, one that adapts nimbly (one could say cynically) to the times. You've likely vegged out to these during marathons, but how often has that meant dealing with the wrong aspect ratio and commercials that make "Octopussy" seem even longer than it is? Besides, "Die Another Day" will make a terrific coaster.



Crack that whip

Indiana Jones

\$26.98 each

A return to the well five years ago ruined what was a fairly tight

franchise — but may we stick up for "Temple of Doom," whose singular darkness (hearts ripped out, immolation, copious bugs) was the result of its makers both going through nasty divorces?

one, from 1962 to 1973, by Shintaro Katsu) is one of the more unique martial arts badasses: a seemingly gentle, blind wanderer who just happens to have incomparably lightning-fast moves and deadly accuracy.

Forbidden Hollywood Volumes 6 and 7

\$47.99 each

You know how most classic Hollywood films are absurdly tame? For a brief moment, they weren't. The period between the advent of sound in the late '20s and 1934 is known as the "Pre-Code" era, when the puritanical Production Code existed but wasn't enforced. Though they seem tame now, the films were sexy, dirty, realistic and teemed with strong female characters. Warner Brothers' series of obscure, quickie programmers are always fun, and the most recent two volumes boast plenty with forgotten star Warren William.

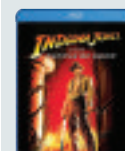


DISC JOCKEY
MATT PRIGGE
matt.prigge@metro.us

Zatoichi: The Blind Swordsman

\$224.95

You're probably not going to get a better deal than this: Twenty-five movies for just over \$200, all Criterion Collection-quality. And unlike the Bonds, it's for a series of which you've likely seen nada. Created for the screen, the character Zatoichi (played in every single



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John Pinette is hungry for laughs

Comedy. The cherubic comic tells us how Americans can't help but overdo it.

'Tis the season for John Pinette. The king of fat-man comics does a four-night stand at Caroline's in the new year to help ratchet up the holiday insanity.

He might not be a household name, but Pinette has been in the game for a couple of decades. Pop-culture addicts might remember him from early '90s cult show "Parker Lewis Can't Lose," the final "Seinfeld" episode where he played a carjacking victim. More recently, his comedy specials have been Netflix on-demand delicacies.

Food seems to be Pinette's definite theme. After an extended run on Broadway as Edna Turnblad in "Hairspray," Pinette was soon pegged to host the H2 Network's gastro-history program "All You Can Eat." As long as edible perks are involved, Pinette is all good.

"There are so many talk shows on TV," says Pinette. "Who could outdo Anthony Bordain, who is a genius, and Andrew Zimmern, who was that kid who would eat anything in elementary school for a buck?"

If anyone could, it's Pinette. While his PG-13 comedy routines tend to focus on his life ("I can't think of anything funnier," he says), one recurring theme tends to be how hard it is to find a shred of sanity in a world so full of irritation. For Pinette, food tends to be that sanity. But he's the first to admit that it's easy to take any passion too far.

"What we do is take something that is good, and then we make it com-



Pinette will have you ho-ho-ing. / PROVIDED

If you go

John Pinette

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pletely insane," he says of our society's tendency to overdo everything. "Like the cupcake store: Do we need any more cupcake shops? I'm sure that there was some conversation at a bridge party or a crazy eighties game (which is what they play where I grew up) where somebody said, 'You know what I'm gonna do? Everybody says I'm a good baker. I thought I would open up a cupcake shop and make six flavors and that's it.' Somebody did that 14 million times!"

JONATHAN
DONALDSON
letters@metro.us



TV watch list



Are these mermaids real? And more importantly, what color are they? / ANIMAL PLANET

MOVIE

'The Santa Clause'

Watching Tim Allen pack on the pounds for his transformation into a reluctant Kris Kringle never gets old. This is a Christmas-movie classic, straight up. 7 P.M., ABCFAM

REALITY

'The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills'

Tonight, the ladies are on vacation in Palm Springs and Kim and Carlton form

a bond over squirrels. We repeat, they "form a bond over squirrels" — doesn't get any more real than that. 8 P.M., BRAVO

EDUCATIONAL

'Mermaids: The New Evidence - Extended Cut'

This is a special presentation — and an extended one, no less — that offers new proof that mermaids are real. Huh. Maybe Megyn Kelly will do a cameo to offer further proof that not only did mermaids and mermen exist, but they were also most definitely white.

10 P.M., ANIMAL
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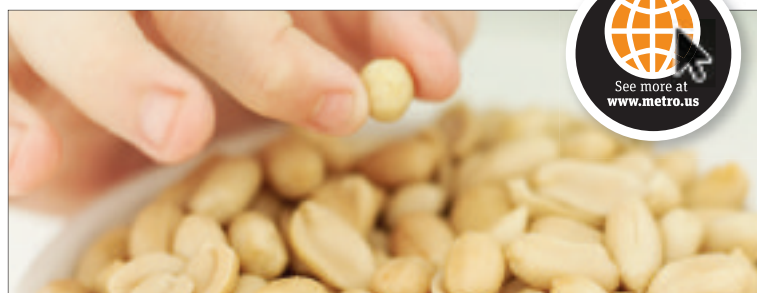
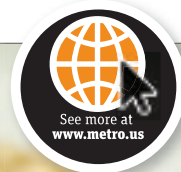
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One more

Peanuts

Surprise! These legumes are not actually nuts. But they're still worthy of a spot on your diet. "Peanuts are a good source of protein, and you can have more of them in one serving," Warren says of the 28 you can enjoy at a time. And though you may

have heard to swap your PB for almond butter, surprisingly, the calorie and protein counts between the two are pretty similar. Why the fuss over almond butter then? "It's more of a processing issue than anything," Warren says. "People think they're making a good choice in reduced-fat peanut

butter, but processing [it means it's] more likely to have partially hydrogenated oils. Almond butter is naturally less processed." Opt for a natural peanut butter to get your fix — just don't go overboard on it. "As long as it's portion-controlled, it can be part of a great diet," she says.

You can enjoy 28 peanuts in a 1-ounce serving. / GETTY IMAGES

quality and quantity of antioxidants," Warren says. Antioxidants ward off disease in your body.

The only caveat about walnuts is that their high omega-3 count makes them one of the fattiest

of nuts. So, if you're going to enjoy a 1-ounce serving (a typical serving size for all nuts), that's about 14 halves. But again, there's no reason to hear the word "fat" and get scared. "You want the oil," Warren

says. "It's just you have less of it in a serving."

Almonds

Because they're lower in calories than other nuts

Want to snack smart? Go nuts!

Health. Fuel up on nuts for a longer life.

MS, RD, CDN, a registered dietitian and the author of the forthcoming "Living a Real Life With Real Food: How to Get Healthy, Lose Weight, and Stay Energized — the Kosher Way," to give us the facts.

Walnuts

These brain-shaped nuts are shaped as so for a reason: They benefit the brain! "Walnuts are the highest nut in terms of omega-3 fatty acids, which help improve memory and decrease inflammation," Warren says. "Inflammation is tied to things like Alzheimer's, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, ADHD and autism." More good news: "Walnuts are the highest in terms of

Nuts can get a bad rap — their high-fat content stops many dieters on the "low fat" bandwagon from putting their hands into a bag. But don't shy away from these little protein powerhouses — the fats in nuts are the monounsaturated, which are the good kind that your body needs to lower cholesterol and your risk of heart disease and stroke (not to mention, that number on the scale). Plus, a recent study from the New England Journal of Medicine links people who eat nuts to longer life spans. Not all nuts are created equal though, so we enlisted Beth Warren,



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Nutty notes

Go unsalted

"Salt makes you want to eat more," Warren says.

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(and lower in calories than once thought), you can eat more of them in a serving — 23 to be exact. Load up on them for their vitamin E levels — the vitamin acts as a barrier for your artery walls, protecting them from plaque buildup, which could lower your cholesterol and your risk for heart disease. Almonds also have magnesium, which “helps with your nerves and relaxes your muscles,” Warren says. (Prone to migraines? Eat magnesium-rich foods, she advises.) The wonder nuts also boast calcium and folate, which is “super important for brain health.”

Pistachios

You can knock back 49 of these, the least caloric of nuts. And you might think of spinach and egg yolks as your best sources for lutein (which supports brain and eye health), but pistachios are very high in it, too.

Pecans

These are a bit higher in calories (enjoy 19 per 1-ounce serving), but “like most nuts, they’re very

high in antioxidants and monounsaturated fats.” Warren likes baking with them because of their texture and sweet flavor. You can also use them as a coating for fish or a salad topper.

Cashews

Dudes, read up and chomp down: These bad boys are loaded with copper, which helps keep your zinc levels in balance. Why does that matter? “Zinc is important in terms of sperm health and testosterone,” Warren says. Zinc also aids in keeping your body healthy by boosting your immune system, iron absorption and thyroid function. Women don’t get a raw deal though: “Zinc, an important antioxidant, supports normal growth and development during pregnancy, childhood and adolescence. It is also important in regulating your sense of taste.” You can have 18 (about a handful) cashews for a 1-ounce serving.



MEREDITH ENGEL
meredith.engel@metro.us

Recipe. Seamus Mullen’s Spicy, Smoky Almonds

Pre-heat oven to 400 F. In a large mixing bowl, combine almonds with olive oil and rosemary and toast in the oven for 5-7 minutes, or until fragrant and deep in color. Shake the pan every minute or so to make sure the almonds are evenly roasted. Once the almonds look nicely roasted, remove them to a large mixing bowl and season with sea salt and toss to coat evenly with the paprika and coriander. They can be eaten right



away as a snack, or you can package them up as a gift. Not only are these almonds tasty on their own, but if you coarsely grind them up they make a terrific crust for a piece of fish.

Ingredients

Serves 8

- 1 pound California almonds
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons smoked

Spanish paprika

- 4 tablespoons fresh rosemary, finely minced
- 1 tablespoon sea salt

Special equipment:

- Cookie tray, food processor

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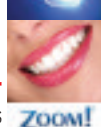
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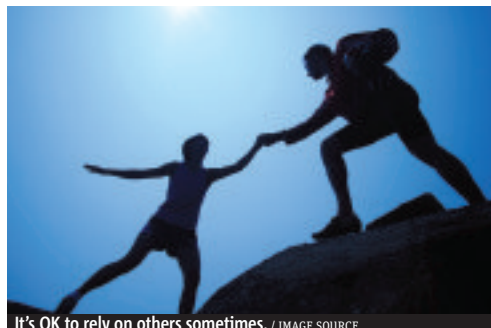
WELLBEING 24

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

During my lectures and workshops, I often hear people complain that they're not feeling supported by others. They might be upset with their colleagues, families or friends — but whatever the circumstances, they've all slipped into victim mode by resenting others for their lack of support. Rather than commiserate with these folks, I immediately ask, "Are you asking for help?" The most common response I receive is, "No, I'm afraid to ask for help."

You see, if we want to be supported by others, we need to get comfortable asking for support. There are many fear-based beliefs that hold us back from asking for help, like "If I ask for help I'll be too vulnerable" or "I'm afraid to ask for help because I'm scared of being disappointed."

These fears can be paralyzing, and they keep us stuck in the pattern of never asking for help and later resenting others for



It's OK to rely on others sometimes. / IMAGE SOURCE

Zen in the City

GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN

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Gabrielle Bernstein is the author of "Spirit Junkie."



not helping. If we want to receive assistance from others, we need to learn to ask for it.

It's important to accept that it's safe to ask for

help. The first step is to just ask, even if you're uncomfortable. The best way to create a new pattern is to step outside your comfort zone and do what you

fear most. You can start today: Keep it simple by merely asking a stranger to hold the elevator or a co-worker to bring you a coffee. Begin to exercise your asking muscles and create a new pattern.

Another tip that will greatly serve you here is to know that by asking for help you are helping others. Deep down, all people truly want to serve others. When you ask someone for help, you give them the gift of service. When they exercise service, they are released from their own inner conflicts and they're elevated by their own commitment to serve. Don't deny others the opportunity to help you.

Ready to exercise your asking muscles? Join me on Jan. 11, where I'll be answering questions live in NYC for an episode of a new series on the Oprah Winfrey Network. To get help from me and be featured on the show visit Intenblog.com/participate-television-series-nyc-author-gabrielle-bernstein.

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Quoted

"If you show up well-fed, the chances of you passing out or doing something crazy is much less. Watch your alcohol intake."

Karen Elizaga, executive coach and author of "Find Your Sweet Spot: A Guide to Personal and Professional Excellence"

Make sure your career moves are as smooth as your dance moves — and stay sober(fish). / IMAGE SOURCE

Surviving your office holiday party

Seasonal. Too much good cheer can spoil your career.

Sure, the halls are decked and there's an array of festive booze ready to be guzzled, but an office holiday party is a ruse. In fact, "office" matters a lot more than "party" in the grand significance of the event. If you're smart, you can make an office holiday party good for your career (and have a little fun too).

Karen Elizaga is an executive coach and author of "Find Your Sweet Spot: A Guide to Personal and Professional Excellence," and she says that it's important to walk into the

holiday bonanza with a certain amount of decorum. "It's certainly a time to celebrate with your colleagues, but it's definitely not a time for payback," she advises. "I tend to think of these parties as a work event, so I go prepared."

Preparedness doesn't mean arriving with a Santa beer helmet or a naughty little elf outfit. A holiday party is an internal networking event, Elizaga says, so she recommends you walk in with a few topics of conversation prepared — and never on an empty stomach. "If you show up well-fed, the chances of you doing something crazy is much less. Watch your alcohol intake."

As the founder of the catering and event plan-

ning company Between the Bread, Ricky Eisen may have a different perspective from Elizaga, but her first piece of advice is the same: "Don't drink too much."

She also says there's no classier move than for employees to thank the party planner. And if the tinsel and holly aren't your style, don't mention it, Eisen says. "Respect the effort of the person who put it together, whether or not it's the kind of party you would throw." Both experts agree that just because you're not shotgunning beers doesn't mean you can't revel in the festive spirit: Have (some) fun.



JULIA FURLAN
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Things to keep in mind

Use it

"An office party is such a great time to make those connections," Elizaga advises. "Somebody who works outside of your immediate vicinity or who you want to pay special gratitude to because they helped you get something done — it's a really great time to connect."

Be aware of monopolizing people's time

"There may be somebody you want to talk to because you think they can help you professionally, but understand that they want to talk to other people too. Be cognizant of the time that you're taking," Elizaga reminds revelers.

You can flirt, but do it cautiously

"I think it's acceptable to make a connection with somebody you've had your eye on at work. But be appropriate. This is not some random bar or party you're at. This is your office," Elizaga says. Make sure you'll be OK with your behavior under the fluorescent lights of Monday.

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SALARY: \$32.9150 per hour for a 40-hour week

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- Picking up the application package in person at MTA NYCT, 180 Livingston Street (Lobby), Brooklyn, NY 11201. Monday through Friday (except holidays), 9AM to 3PM.

Exam Information Hotline: (718) 566-JOBS (5627)



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Horoscope

♐ **Sagittarius** | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. You may get an opportunity to meet people who can help you reach your career goals.

♑ **Capricorn** | Dec. 22-Jan. 20. Your moodiness may alienate you. Be careful what you say. Try to avoid being controversial, and make amends quickly.

♒ **Aquarius** | Jan. 21-Feb. 18. Avoid getting caught up in details. Maintain a general overview. Your time is better spent reading or meeting up with friends who provide mental stimulation.

♓ **Pisces** | Feb. 19-March 20. Traveling will bring new partnerships. Avoid investing in moneymaking schemes. Be sure to consult with a financial adviser.

♈ **Aries** | March 21-April 20. Seek a promotion. Be wary of competition. If you take special care to avoid being criticized, affairs will work out well.

♉ **Taurus** | April 21-May 21. Now is not the time to worry about your personal life. Focus on your professional goals, and you'll be amazed by what you can accomplish.

♊ **Gemini** | May 22-June 20. If you get out and meet like-minded people, you could expand your network of friends. It is also a very good time to consider expanding your family.

♋ **Cancer** | June 21-July 22. Opportunities for partnerships abound. Now is the time to make a difference through humanitarian ventures.

♌ **Leo** | July 23-Aug. 22. Your work rather than home life is where you will shine most right now. But don't neglect your domestic responsibilities.

♍ **Virgo** | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. Plan to travel. Self-improvement efforts will make you feel good and boost your aesthetic appeal.

♎ **Libra** | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. Pay attention to nutrition, as unwanted weight gain is likely at this time. Maintain a healthy routine. You can take control.

♏ **Scorpio** | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Close friends may steer you in the wrong direction regarding a sensitive situation. Keep in mind that it is you who must endure the consequences of your actions. **BERNICE BEDE OSOL**

Sudoku: Easy and hard

9								
4	3	6			1		7	2
	2			4			6	
	7		1		9		6	
			7		3			
5		8			9		1	
	8			3			5	
3	6		9		8	2	1	
								4

	6			3				
2	3	5			4			
	7	1	2		6	3		9
	4							
9			1		3			7
							1	
3		4	6		1	9	8	
			3			7	4	2
				4		3		

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Crossword

Across

- 1 Eye protector
- 5 Specks on a globe
- 10 Tough fiber
- 14 Mountain refrain
- 15 Wingspreads
- 16 Suits to —
- 17 Kind of tradition
- 18 Baker's "must" (2 wds.)
- 20 Basted
- 22 Primary color
- 23 Hair conditioner
- 24 Scuba enthusiast
- 26 Ailurophobe's fear
- 27 Smelling salts
- 30 Treadmill enthusiast
- 34 Grasshopper
- 35 "Sorry!"
- 36 I, to Claudius
- 37 Bank dep.
- 38 Prized violin
- 40 Cornstarch brand
- 41 Frat letter
- 42 Married Milles.
- 43 Sculptor's pieces
- 45 Fashionable London district
- 47 Tireless
- 48 Hostel
- 49 Nearly frozen
- 50 Pool member
- 53 Gullible person
- 54 Midnight —
- 58 Well-driller's concern (2

Down

- 2 Tolstoy et al.
- 2 Real estate unit
- 3 Bandleader Artie —
- 4 Sank a putt (2 wds.)
- 5 Tenet
- 6 Flowery shrub
- 7 Not as strict
- 8 Camelot lady
- 9 Form 1040 info
- 10 Sisters' clothes
- 11 London school
- 12 Gulls' cries
- 13 Soccer great
- 19 Metric weights
- 21 Tumults
- 25 A, B or C
- 26 Pierre or Helena
- 27 Apprehension
- 28 High-grade coffee
- 29 Kirk and Spock's friend
- 30 Like jalapenos
- 31 Pithy
- 32 Incite (2 wds.)
- 33 Perch
- 35 W. Hemisphere alliance
- 39 Mal de —
- 40 Drought
- 42 Grand house
- 44 Cornelia — Skinner
- 46 Best
- 47 Flounce on a garment
- 49 Magda, for one
- 50 Dog-paddle
- 51 Rhett's hangout
- 52 Footnote abbr. (2 wds.)
- 53 Umpire's shout
- 55 The younger Guthrie
- 56 Hi or bye
- 57 Didn't spoil
- 59 License plate
- 60 Famous cathedral town

Weekend's answer



Letters

Leaders hold noses and shake hands

Re: 'President should be political, not polite' (Metro, Dec. 13-15) Too bad we can't upload photos of other famous political handshakes for letter writer Garold Minkin to comment on. Nixon and Mao, Reagan and Gorbachev, McCain and Gaddafi, Rumsfeld and Saddam. The people of China, Russia, Libya and Iraq couldn't have been too happy about those photo ops, and

those weren't chance encounters at a state funeral, those were planned in advance. Are they traitors too?

KATHY KOURIAN, VIA EMAIL

OMG, Metro

Re: 'The Word' (Metro, Dec. 13-15) OMG. Whoever wrote today's gossip section in Metro is amazing. It was absolutely hilarious. I literally laughed out loud at each article on the subway. People must have thought I was insane. Keep it coming and give that writer a raise! Soooo funny. Thanks for that.

CARA ANDERSON, VIA EMAIL

Online

Read letters at Metro.us

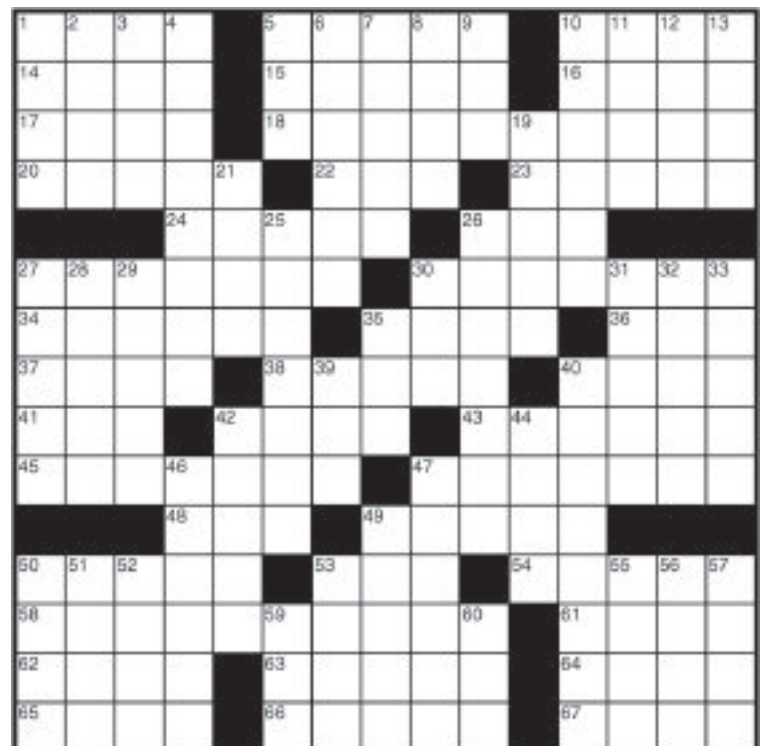
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letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

Online

You can use your smartphone to discover today's crossword answers — right now! Download and open the Blippar app on your smartphone and hold the screen over the puzzle — it's that easy!





Jets' playoff hopes on life support after loss

NFL. New York put up a representative effort against the Panthers, but it came up short in the end.

For all intents and purposes, the Jets are out of the playoffs after a 30-20 loss at the Panthers in a game that never felt out of reach until the very end.

The Jets (6-8) look likely to end a third straight season out of the playoffs.

The Panthers ran out to a 16-6 halftime lead behind a 72-yard screen pass from Cam Newton to DeAngelo Williams, but the Jets battled back.

The momentum swung to the Jets when Sheldon Richardson, arguably the league's best defensive rookie, came into the backfield and scored a touchdown with 3:04 left in the third quarter to cut the Panthers' lead to 16-13. It took two tries for Richardson to plow two yards for the touchdown, but the play showed Richardson's versatility. Richardson's first NFL touchdown capped off a nine-play, 86-yard drive by the Jets.

Newton sizzled in the first half, as he was 12-of-15 for 224 yards and a touchdown. But in the second half, he was limited to just 4-of-9 for 49 yards.

With Carolina holding a narrow 16-13 lead, the Panthers blocked a Ryan



Geno Smith finished the game 15-of-28 for 167 yards, one touchdown and one interception — which was returned for a touchdown. / GETTY IMAGES

By the numbers

5

Captain Munnerlyn has seven career interceptions, five of which have been returned for a touchdown, including one Sunday.

Quigley punt early in the fourth quarter to take over possession on the Jets' 14-yard line. Four

plays later, fullback Mike Tolbert plowed through an open hole on the goal line for a 1-yard touchdown and a 23-13 lead for the Panthers.

For much of the game, rookie quarterback Geno Smith was calm and poised, completing short passes and throwing the ball away when necessary. But with 8:17 left in the fourth quarter, Smith locked onto wide receiver Santonio Holmes and

threw into double coverage. Cornerback Captain Munnerlyn, who also had two sacks, returned the interception for a pick-six to put the Panthers up big.

It was Smith's lone interception of the afternoon, but the fifth time this year one has been returned for a touchdown.

KRISTIAN DYER
sports@metro.us

Playoff scenarios

The Jets aren't technically out of the playoff race, even if their chances are as slim as they come.

- First, the Jets need to win both of their remaining games — vs. Cleveland this week and at Miami in Week 17 — to finish 8-8 on the season.
- Then, they need the Dolphins (8-6), Chargers (7-7) and Ravens (7-6) to lose the rest of their games.
- A win by the Ravens tonight against the Lions would officially eliminate the Jets from playoff contention.

3
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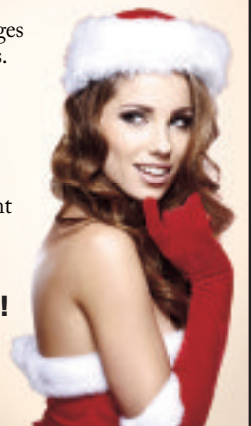
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Gardy stays

Yankees not planning to trade Gardner

If the Yankees are going to make another splash this offseason, it apparently won't involve trading Brett Gardner.

Yankees president Randy Levine said Sunday the team has no

plans to trade the center fielder this offseason, despite speculation to the contrary.

"One of the reasons the baseball people signed Jacoby Ellsbury is the two of them together present a tremendous dynamic one-two or nine-one [in the batting order], whatever [manager] Joe Girardi decides



Brett Gardner / GETTY IMAGES

to write in at the top of the lineup," Levine told ESPN Radio.

Gardner was seen as one of the Yankees' better trade chips, and with the signings of Ellsbury and Carlos Beltran, a possibly unnecessary player. The team also has outfielders Vernon Wells and Ichiro Suzuki under contract. **METRO**

Erectile Dysfunction Clinic Opens in New York

BY STEVE MUELLER
Men's Health Consultant

NEW YORK • Local physicians at a new medical office in New York are so sure their medication will help men with erectile dysfunction, they are offering the first 37 callers a free in-office medication dose.

Erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation have long been a problem for millions of men, in spite of the popularity of Viagra, Cialis and Levitra. Many men aren't helped by these pills or cannot take them due to adverse side effects.

New York Men's Medical custom blends over 180 combinations of medications for each patient. "That's why our success rate is so high," says Dr. Kevin Hornsby, M.D. and author of the book *"A Doctor's Guide to Erectile Dysfunction."* "We help men as old as ninety-four, with diabetes, prostate surgery and heart conditions. Regardless of their age or medical history our results everyday are amazing."

All medications are FDA approved, and no surgery is involved. "We adjust the prescription for a man's performance to 45-minutes, an hour, 90-min-

utes or longer," according to Dr. Hornsby, "and patients see results right in our office. After climax the patient stays erect the entire period of time. This allows them to achieve a second climax and adequately satisfy their partner. No other medication can do this. We offer a simple guarantee: If you don't respond to the medication on the first visit the office visit is free." With that guarantee, local patients have nothing to lose.

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Giants pull no-show in loss to Seahawks

NFL. The Giants had nothing left to play for and looked like it against the team with the best record in the NFL.

The Giants said they're playing for pride now that their playoff dreams are officially over. But if their 23-0 defeat to the Seahawks was any indication, they'll need to find a better cause.

Head coach Tom Coughlin seemed as distraught and embarrassed as any time during his Big Blue tenure as he tried to explain what happened — particularly on the offensive side of the ball.

"It was a pathetic offensive performance. I told them just now that



Red Bryant and the Seattle defensive line harassed Eli Manning into five interceptions on Sunday. / GETTY IMAGES

those that gave their all I appreciated it and those that didn't I told them I felt sorry for them, because they're missing the whole point," said Coughlin. "The [Saturday night] meeting was intense and positive. I'm not taking anything away from Se-

attle's defense, as they're the No. 1 team in the league, but for our offense to keep giving it back to them with turnovers over and over again is unacceptable."

The main culprit, Eli Manning (18-of-31 with 156 yards and no touch-

downs), threw a career-high five interceptions and actually connected with Seattle defenders more times than he did with his "Big Three" wide-out corps of Victor Cruz, Hakeem Nicks and Rueben Randle. That trio only combined for three receptions for 30 yards — with Randle getting blanked.

"You look forward to playing those three hours on Sunday, so it's no fun getting beat like that. It's tough to deal with. It's not what we're used to around here," said Manning. "I can't call anybody out and do anything like that, but you can maybe look at the film and see [quitters]. I hate to think that guys weren't prepared or didn't come out to play."

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Around the NFL

Packers 37, Cowboys 36

- It was first thought that the Eagles had been the biggest NFC East dud of the day, but the Cowboys stole that title, choking away a 26-3 halftime lead. Matt Flynn touchdown passes to Jordy Nelson and Andrew Quarless in the third quarter cut Dallas' lead to 29-17 heading into the fourth. Dallas looked like it was going pull away thanks to a Dez Bryant touchdown with 8:04 remaining, but the Packers wouldn't let up as James Jones hauled in a pass from three yards out with 4:23 left, and Eddie Lacy barreled in from a yard out with 1:34 left. Tony Romo threw his second interception of the day with 1:24 remaining.



Eddie Lacy rumbled for 141 yards Sunday. / GETTY IMAGES

Thomas in the end zone. The Dolphins (8-6) stayed alive in the AFC playoff chase while the Patriots squandered a chance to take over the No. 1 seed in the AFC.

Dolphins 24, Patriots 20

- Tom Brady worked his way down the field with precision in the final moments of Sunday's game in South Florida, but couldn't punch it in from the Miami 14 on fourth-and-5 as Brady was picked off by Michael

Colts 25, Texans 3

- The Colts shredded their division rival Sunday behind two touchdown passes by Andrew Luck and a defense that tormented Houston QB Case Keenum (18-of-34, 168 yards, zero touchdowns, two intercep-

tions). Indy linebacker Robert Mathis became the franchise's career sack leader in the win. The Colts (9-5) have already clinched the AFC South.

49ers 33, Buccaneers 14

- The Niners (10-4) are getting hot at the best possible time as they won their fourth straight game Sunday over the Bucs in Tampa. The Buccaneers were within six points of San Fran throughout much of the fourth quarter, but Phil Dawson's 21-yard field goal and Kendall Hunter's 2-yard fumble return for a touchdown allowed the visitors to pull away.

Chiefs 56, Raiders 31

- The Chiefs exploded for 21 first-quarter points, and Jamaal Charles caught eight balls for 195 yards and four touchdowns in a Kansas City rout. Charles had five touchdowns on the day and tied a franchise mark. The Chiefs clinched a playoff spot with the win.

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Law at 1472 York Ave., Store
2, New York, NY 10075, New
York County, for on-premises
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66 John Street, 11th floor, on
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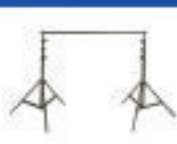


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